



HOUSE HANDBOOK

2025-26



WELCOME

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WELCOME FROM THE HOUSEMISTRESS

On behalf of all the girls and tutors, I'm delighted to welcome you to Bowes House. Being Housemistress truly is a privilege — it's a role that allows me to be part of something incredibly special: helping to guide and shape young people during such an important time in their lives.

I'm lucky to have experienced Barney from many different angles — as a teacher, tutor, mentor, colleague and, proudly, as a parent. That breadth of experience has only deepened my appreciation for everything that makes this place so unique. The warmth and sense of belonging at Barney is second to none, and it's this spirit that drives our commitment to supporting every girl's personal journey — building their confidence, self-belief, resilience and curiosity in an ever-changing world.

I'm passionate about learning, and I love sharing that passion in the classroom. But what matters just as much is how we support our pupils beyond their studies. In Bowes House, we work closely as a tutor team to ensure that every girl feels seen, supported and encouraged — not just academically, but emotionally and socially too. Together, we aim to create an environment where the girls can flourish and grow into capable, confident and kind young people, ready to embrace all the opportunities that lie ahead.

We hope — and believe — that the girls are proud to be part of Bowes House and all that it represents. And as a team, we're certainly proud to be part of their journey.

With best wishes,

Janey Dolby



OUR HISTORY

Bowes House was founded in September 2002. By this time, the number of day girls in School had increased to a level which made the creation of a second House for day girls an obvious development, not only so that the physical accommodation would be improved, but also to facilitate inter-House competition and to create a more intimate environment for the members of both Bowes and Marwood.

The House shield takes its inspiration from the Bowes-Lyon coat of arms - a nod to the nearby Bowes Museum from which the House takes its name. The House area is located close to the walls of the museum and is situated near all teaching areas. The Housemistress has her study here and this is also used as a base for the tutors. There are three common rooms, one for girls in Years 7, 8 and 9, one for Years 10 and 11 the Sixth Form common room is located between the Main House and the Sixth Form Centre. Bowes House is currently 'home' to around 80 girls, who share the building with the girls of Marwood - they move freely between the common rooms of both Houses.

HOUSE TUTORS

Tutors oversee their tutees day academic and pastoral life and are the first port of call for any queries. Each morning, tutors will meet their tutees for registrations, and throughout the week, as part of the HeadSpace programme, there is a group Tutor Time, as well as opportunities for individual meetings.

Tutors have regular contact with home through phone calls, emails and parents' evenings. At strategic points in the year, your child engages in regular target setting sessions and reviews with their tutor. Tutors work very closely with the HSM in order to raise and resolve any issues relating to pupils' pastoral or academic performance. Any repetitive or significant pastoral, behavioural or academic concerns will be dealt with by the HSM.

If a pupil is going to be absent from school due to illness, please inform the tutor and HSM by 8.40am.



PUPIL POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Pupils have ample opportunity to take on responsibility throughout their time in the House. Each year, a member of the Upper Sixth is chosen to be the Head of House.

A Deputy (sometimes Deputies) and House Prefects will be chosen to support them. These positions generally go to pupils who are wholehearted, trustworthy, approachable, and who set a good example. These senior pupils are expected to take on responsibility for the organisation of House practices and are expected to be role models for younger pupils.

As experienced members of the House, those in positions of responsibility have a varied role; this could range from being on duty in the House, disseminating information to other pupils or being the first point of contact for a pupil who has an opinion they wish to channel or a problem they feel they would prefer to air with another pupil.

In addition to these senior roles, pupils from across all year groups have the opportunity to volunteer for different committees. These include Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, Peer Supporters (Sixth Form), Diversity Focus Group and Food Committee.

Each September hustings are held for pupils who wish to represent their year group on the School Council. A whole School election then takes place and the School Council members for that year are announced in the Headmaster's Assembly.

HOUSEKEEPING

House Area

The House area is the base which the girls use during the school day. They come straight to their common room when they arrive at School in the morning, return at morning break, before and after they have had lunch, at the end of lessons at 4.05pm and finally come to collect their belongings prior to going home at the end of the day. Pupils are free to visit their House area at any time during the day, except during lessons. They may visit other common rooms in Bowes and Marwood. All girls are expected to keep their common rooms tidy and, generally, they do make a good job of looking after their belongings, but occasionally it is necessary to allocate tidying up to those who are not so tidy. In addition, the girls are allowed to decorate their common rooms with posters and artwork.

House Subs

Each pupil is charged £15, once a year. This is added to the School bill. The money is used to help make the common room a more homely environment. It is also used for awards, tutor group activities and to help provide additional material for House activities.

Security

Girls are allocated a locker space and encouraged to use it to keep property safe. Valuable items can be kept here or given to the Housemistress for safekeeping in her office, which is located next to the common rooms. The Housemistress or the maintenance staff lock Bowes House each evening.





DAY-TO-DAY

Registration

Registration takes place each morning by House tutors and is completed between 8.30-8.45am and then again by teachers at the end of lunchtime. This is recorded electronically in a central School database, an absentees list is produced after each registration session closes, which is after 8:50am and 1:50pm each day. If a pupil is absent from School, their parents/guardian must ring the House Office or send an email before 8.40am. If a pupil arrives late to School, they should register themselves at the General Office.

Wednesday House Meetings

House meetings are held each Wednesday at 8.55am. The HSM leads the meeting. Each meeting starts with School notices and then there is often a review of the previous week, followed by preparation for the following week. Weekly awards are given to those who have been nominated by pupils and staff. Nominations are for those who demonstrate characteristics such as: kindness, compassion, leadership, selflessness, and for those who have experienced successes both in school and through activities outside of school. Weekly merit prizes are also given to those that gain the most merits in the Juniors, Inters and Seniors categories. Finally, the House meeting finishes with a “Pentatalk” on the weekly theme delivered by one of our Sixth Formers.



HOUSE COMPETITIONS

House competitions cover a vast array of interests, both sporting and non-sporting in order to encourage as many pupils as possible to take part. While the majority of House competitions take place internally on Wednesday afternoons throughout the School year, please look out for invitations to certain House events which parents may attend, such as the Barney Run and Sports Day.



REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Pupils are awarded merits for good work and strong assessments and these are celebrated in House meetings. A number of biannual and yearly trophies are also awarded in the House, chosen by the HSM and Tutors. House trophies have been donated by departing and former staff and students.

If academic progress is below a satisfactory standard the Tutor or HSM may instigate an academic report for a short period. This requires teachers to comment upon work and/or conduct on a lesson-by-lesson basis and is to be taken to the Housemaster for countersignature each day. The Tutor reviews the report each day and will contact home if they see the need for more dialogue. For infringements of House expectations, the HSM may impose an appropriate and proportionate sanction that helps the pupil to reflect on how they would change their behaviour in the future. More serious infringements of school rules would be referred to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Parents may also be invited to a meeting to discuss the progress of their child. Simple house-based infringements are dealt with by the Tutor/Housemaster.

CONTACT WITH HOME

Routine home contact will happen via assessments, reports and parents' evenings. The Housemistress or Tutors generally make phone calls to address other issues as they arise. Parents are encouraged to call the Housemistress if they have any issues they wish to address. Parents should expect a call from their child's Tutor if there are any immediate concerns about attendance, lateness and academic progress. Parents can also contact Tutors to request a meeting in person or on the phone.

There is a direct telephone line to the Housemistress's study, which parents and guardians are encouraged to use to discuss any aspect of their child's education and welfare. The Housemistress can also be contacted by email. Parents and guardians are welcome to arrange meetings with the Housemistress and/or their daughter's Tutor at any point throughout the term.

The school sends out a regular email with any pertinent letters that staff wish parents to read.







BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL